



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1910.

Harry was right after all. This is a country town, all right.

"And are you working here, Mr. Duncan?" Josie pursued. "I'm supposed to be, I'm afraid I don't know the business very well as yet."

"Oh, that's awfully nice," Angie thought.

He thanked her humbly. "We didn't expect to see you here," Josie assured him. "We just thought we'd like some soda."

"Soda!" he parroted, horrified. He cast a glance askance at the tawdry fountain. "Let's see, how d'you work the infernal thing?" he asked himself, utterly bewildered.

"Yes," Angie chimed in, "it's so warm this afternoon we—"

"I've got to put it through somehow," he thought savagely, and aloud. "Yes, certainly," he said and smiled winningly. "Will you be pleased to step this way?"

Out of the corners of his eyes he detected the amused look that passed between the girls. "Oh, very well!" he said beneath his breath. "You may laugh, but you asked for soda, and



"OH, DON'T SAY THAT," HE PLEADED.

soda you shall have, my dears, if you die of it." He put himself behind the counter with an air of great determination and leaned upon it with both hands outspread until he realized that this was the pose of a groceryman. "What'll you have?" he demanded genially. "Er—that is—I mean, would you prefer vanilla or—ah—soda?"

A chant answered him: "I hate vanilla."

"And so do I."

"Oh, don't say that!" he pleaded. "Of course you know there's—ah—vanilla and vanilla. Ah, some vanilla I know is detestable, but when you get a real—"



"YES," ANGIE CHIMED IN, "IT'S SO WARM."

ly fine vintage—ah—imported vanilla, it's quite another matter—ah—particularly at this season of the year."

His confusion was becoming painful. "Oh, is it?" asked Josie helpfully. Her eyes dwelt upon his with a confiding expression which he later characterized as a baby stare, and he was promptly reduced to babbling idiocy.

"Indeed it is; no doubt whatever, Miss Lockwood. Especially just now, you know—ah—after the back season—"

ah—I mean, when the weather is—in a way you might put it, vanilla weather."

"But I like chocolate best," Angie pouted. And he hated her consumedly for the moment.

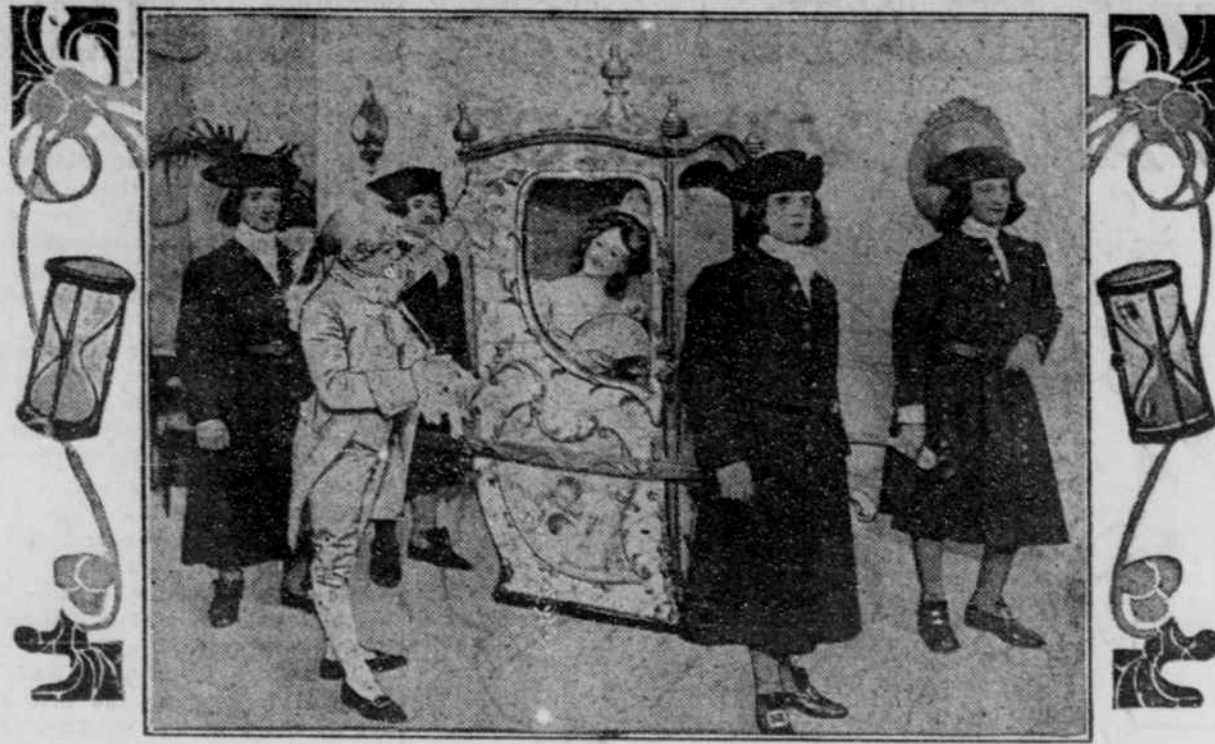
"Very well," Josie told him sweetly, "I'll have the vanilla."

He thanked her with unnecessary effusion and turned to inspect the glassware. There could be no mistake about the right jar, however; and, seizing it, he removed the metal cap and placed it before the girls.

With less ease he discovered a whisky glass and put it beside the bottle, with a cordial wave of the hand.

A pause ensued. Duncan was smiling fatuously, serene in the belief that he had solved the problem—the way to

BRINGING IN THE NEW YEAR—"IT'S ENGLISH, YOU KNOW"



At a large hotel in London which is quite popular with Americans who are rich enough to enjoy the costly accommodations a "stunt is pulled off" every New Year's eve which is distinctly different from any ceremony in connection with the advent of the infant year in America. "It's English, quite English, you know." The hundreds of Americans and other guests, including persons from all continental countries and usually a Hindu nabob or two, engage in an evening of dancing in the grand ballroom. At midnight, just as the clocks strike the hour that ushers in the new year, the guests hear a knocking at the ballroom door. The master of ceremonies opens the door. Upon the threshold are four men carrying a sedan chair of most elaborate pattern, which contains a passenger a beautiful young lady—the pick of the party. An attendant meets the antique caravan and escorts it to the center of the ballroom floor, where, amid the admiring company, he assists the star beauty to alight, then becomes her partner in the dance. This pretty ceremony is called "bringing in the new year." The real festivities of the evening begin when Miss New Year makes her advent.



"IT'S ONE OF THE RULES, BUT I DIDN'T MAKE IT."

serve soda was to make them help themselves. It was very simple, only they didn't. With a start he became sensible that they were eying him strangely.

"You—ah—wanted vanilla, did you not?"

"Yes, thanks, vanilla," Josie agreed. "Well, that's it," he said firmly, indicating the jar and the glass.

Josie giggled. "But I don't want to drink it clear. You put the sirup in the glass, you know, and then the soda."

"Oh, I see! You want to make a highball—ah—a long drink of it. Ah, yes!" He procured a glass of the regulation size. "Now I understand." A pause. "If you'll be good enough to help yourself to the sirup."

"No, you do it," Josie pleaded. "Certainly!" He lifted the whisky glass and the jar and began to pour. "If you'll just say when."

"What? Oh, that's enough, thank you!"

"If I ever get out of this fix I'll blow the whole shooting match," he promised himself, holding the glass beneath the faucet and fiddling nervously with the valves. For a moment he fancied the tank must be empty, for nothing



"WE WERE HOPING YOU WOULD JOIN THE CHORUS."

came of his efforts. Then abruptly the fixture seemed to explode. "A geyser!" he cried, blinded with the dash of carbonated water and sirup in his face, while he fumbled furiously with the valves.

As unexpectedly as it had begun the flow ceased. He put down the glass, found his handkerchief and mopped his dripping face. When able to see again he discovered the young women leaning against one of the showcases,

Weak with laughter, safe remove.

"Our soda's so strong, you know," he apologized. "But if you'll stay where you are I'll try again."

Warned by experience, he worked at the machine gingerly, finally producing a thin, spluttering trickle. Beaming with triumph, he looked up. "I think it's safe now," he suggested. "I seem to have it under control."

Angie and Josie returned, torn by distrust, but unable to resist the fascination of the stranger in our village. And there's no denying the boy was good looking and a gentleman by birth and education.

He had filled one glass and was tinkering it with sirup when he caught again that confiding smile of Josie's full upon him as the beams of a noon-day sun.

"Haven't we seen you at church, Mr. Duncan?" she said prettily. "I think perhaps you may have," he conceded. "I have seen you both."

The second glass (for he was determined that Angie should not escape) took up all his attention for an instant. "Do you have to go, too?" he inquired out of this deep preoccupation.

"What?"

"I mean do you attend regularly?" he amended hastily.

"Oh, yes, of course," Josie simpered, accepting the glass he offered her. "You make it a rule to go every Sunday, don't you, Mr. Duncan?"

He permitted himself an indiscretion, secure in the belief it would pass unchallenged: "It's one of the rules, but I didn't make it."

"Did you know there was a vacancy in the choir?" Angie asked, taking up her glass.

"Choir?"

"Yes," Josie chimed in; "we were hoping you'd join. I want you to awfully."

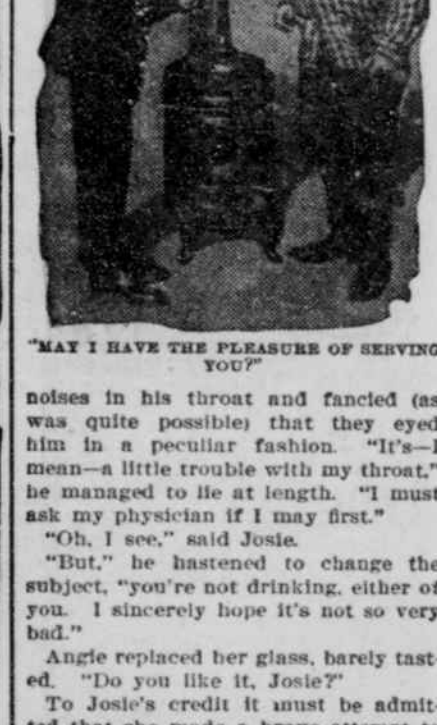
"We're both in the choir," Angie explained.

"And all the girls want you to join. Don't they, Angie?"

"Oh, yes, indeed; they're all just dying to meet you."

"I'll have to write and ask," he said abstractedly.

"Why, what do you mean by that?" Josie's question struck him dumb with consternation. He made curious



"MAY I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF SERVING YOU?"

noises in his throat and fancied as was quite possible that they eyed him in a peculiar fashion. "It's—I mean—a little trouble with my throat," he managed to lie at length. "I must ask my physician if I may first."

"Oh, I see," said Josie.

"But," he hastened to change the subject, "you're not drinking, either of you. I sincerely hope it's not so very bad."

Angie replaced her glass, barely tasted. "Do you like it, Josie?"

To Josie's credit it must be admitted that she made a brave attempt to drink. But the mixture was undoubtedly flat, stale and unprofitable. She sighed, put it back on the counter and rose to the emergency.

"Why don't you try a glass, Mr. Duncan?" Angie added with malice, slyly nudging Josie.

"I'm on the wagon—I mean, I don't drink at all," he said wretchedly, and was deeply grateful for the diversion afforded by the entrance of a third customer.

It was Tracey Tanner, as usual swollen with important tidings, as usual propelling himself through the world at a heavy trot. It has always been a source of wonderment to how Tracey manages to keep so stout with all the violent exercise he takes.

"Say, Angie," he twanged at sight of her, "I've been lookin' for you everywhere. Did you hear that?"

He stopped instantaneously with open mouth as he saw Duncan behind the counter, and open mouthed he remained while the young man came round and advanced toward him, with a bland smirk, accompanied by a professional bow and rubbing of hands.

"May I have the pleasure of serving you, Mr. Tanner?"

"Huh?" bleated Tracey, dumfounded.

"Is there anything you wish to purchase?"

A violent emotion stirred in Tracey. Sounds began to emanate from his heaving chest. "N-a-n-o, ma'am!" he breathed explosively.

Duncan bowed again, his face expressionless. "Then will you be good enough to excuse me?" He turned precisely and made his way back to the counter.

As if released from some spell of strong enchantment by the movement, Tracey swung on his heel and lunged for the door.

"What was it you wanted to ask me, Tracey?" Angie called after him. As the boy disappeared at a hard gallop his response floated back, "I forgot."

"I'm afraid I must have frightened him!" Duncan said inquiringly.

"Oh, no; not at all," Josie reassured him. "He's just gone to tell everybody you're here."

"Come, Josie; we've been here ever so long." Angie moved slowly toward the door, but Josie inclined to linger.

"Don't hurry, I beg of you," Duncan interposed.

"Oh, we haven't hurried," she said, with a gush of gratification that star-



"IT SERVES ME RIGHT," HE CONCLUDED.

ted the man. "You'll remember what I said about the choir, won't you?"

He braced himself to take advantage of the opening. "I shall never forget it," he said impressively. She gave him her hand. "Then goodbye."

"Not goodbye, I trust?" He retained the hand, despoiling himself inexpressively.

"Oh, we'll be in again, won't we, Angie?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" "My land, Angie! What do you think? I'd almost forgotten to pay for the soda!"

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(To Be Continued.)

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